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## Police work to secure tunnels for the RNC



A lot of work is underway for the Republican National Convention in September. Officials have their hands full of even planning and security issues.

St. Paul Police are also dealing with one rather unusual security challenge.

Come September, the bright light of worldwide attention will be focused on the Xcel Energy

Center.

St. Paul Police have been working for months to create a security plan to protect President George W. Bush, the Republican Presidential candidates, and thousands of convention delegates.

Not only do police have to secure everything inside the facility, they're also facing a challenge down below in the tunnels and caves that run beneath the Xcel and through downtown St. Paul.

5 EYEWITNESS NEWS first reported on the tunnel systems in 2005. According to St. Paul city employees, there are places people could go and wreak havoc.

From caves along the river, to manhole covers—if you know what you're doing, you could wind up downtown, in places touching the foundations of secured buildings.

"We are going to use a variety of means to secure those," said St. Paul Police Assistant Chief Matt Bostrom.

On the surface, the tunnels may look like a terribly complicated problem—these underground concerns have grown relatively small for Bostrom who's running the security detail.

"It is our job to protect them. We knew going in we would need a specific plan to protect around the Xcel and we have taken measures and are continuing to take measures to make them more secure and at a level that this event requires," he said.

During the 2004 Democratic Convention, Boston Police worked out a plan to secure a series of tunnels and a train station, which sits beneath the Fleet Center in Massachusetts.

St. Paul Police went to Boston and took note.

"It wasn't a surprise. We're not the first. We were able to look at what Boston did too, and secure those access points," Bostrom said. "Because the international media lens is on us, we cannot afford any missteps so from a security standpoint we really have to do our homework."